



Don Nickles, Chairman
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Senate holds the line in first major spending battle

Homeland Security Appropriations Bill survives nine budget challenges

WASHINGTON—Senate Budget Committee Chairman Don Nickles today applauded Sen. Thad Cochran (R-MS) for his leadership during this week's consideration of the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Bill.

In the first significant challenges to the budget's discretionary spending caps, the Senate under Sen. Cochran's leadership sustained the budget during nine votes on measures to increase spending \$17.7 billion over the budget next year and a whopping \$254 billion over 10 years.

"The Budget Resolution gives our appropriations subcommittee chairmen the procedural tools and protections they need to manage their bills," Nickles added. "I compliment Senator Cochran for using these safeguards to repeatedly and effectively enforce his bill.

"These amendments would have increased spending in this bill by more than 60 percent. That is unrealistic to the point of being ridiculous," Nickles said. "We have invested significant resources in homeland security efforts since 2001. Non-defense discretionary spending on homeland security activities will be 17 percent higher in 2004 than it was last year. This bill provides funds over and above even the President's request for next year.

"Meanwhile, discretionary spending overall has grown by 15.4 percent the past two years. That is unsustainable. The Senate Budget Resolution holds the line on discretionary spending increases at a responsible 2.4 percent, about 1 percentage point higher than the inflation rate last year. We should stick with it.

"The Senate has now acted on four of the 13 appropriations bills and many of the toughest challenges are ahead. We still have a \$400 billion prescription drug bill to finish and a highway bill that is not out of the starting gate yet. I am hopeful we can maintain a little fiscal discipline during the remainder of the year," Nickles said.

The bill provides \$28.521 billion in discretionary budget authority for the Department of Homeland Security. This is \$1.407 billion more than the President requested and is \$7.254 billion more than last year.